



CHAYAT HASHAVUA: HORSE

CAN ANYONE TEACH US THE HEBREW NAME FOR HORSE?

- The common Hebrew name for the horse is *sus*
- At times *rechesh* is used, which means “a swift steed,” but comes from the root meaning a collection of property—and, of course, horses were very valuable property in the ancient world.
- Why do you imagine that was so?

IN ANCIENT ISRAEL THE HORSE WAS NOT THOUGHT OF IN THE SAME WAY AS OTHER DOMESTICATED ANIMALS, LIKE SHEEP AND COWS.

- The horse was considered a fighting animal and so it was a symbol of war, unlike the donkey which was a symbol of peace.
- There are many places in the Bible where horses are described as battle.
- Have you ever ridden a horse—and did it seem more like a peaceful animal or a warlike animal?
- We know from the Bible that King Solomon had thousands of horses. (1 Kings 5:6 and 2 Chronicles 9:25)
- In one part of the Bible (Proverbs 21:31) horses are praised for their willingness to serve their masters in the heat of battle.
- Why do you think horses are almost never used in battle anymore?

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT HORSES?

- They’re beautiful.
- They’re fun to ride.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE LEAST ABOUT HORSES?

- They’re very big and dangerous if they kick you or throw you.
- They can take you for a wild ride if you don’t know how to control them.
- They can cost a lot to keep and feed.

IT’S TIME FOR THE HORSE QUIZ!

- What other animals are “close cousins” of horses? (Zebras and donkeys.)
- How long ago were horses domesticated—when did people start to use horses to carry them and do their work for them—600, 6,000, or 60,000 years ago? (6,000)
- How many horses are alive in the world today—about 6, 60, or 600 million? (60)

- How much does a typical riding horse weigh—500, 1000, or 1500 pounds? (1000)
- How much do you imagine the heaviest horse on record weighed? (3,200 pounds)
- What's the top speed of a horse? (About 45 miles per hour.)

THERE'S A STORY ABOUT A HORSE THAT WAS ACTING VERY STRANGELY.

- The owner of the horse went to his rabbi for advice because the animal was behaving in very odd ways.
- The horse no longer accepted his hay or oats or water; he insisted on the finest sweets and beverages and, instead of the stable floor, demanded a mattress and pillow.
- The rabbi asked the owner, "Did you say your prayers this morning?" —to which the man answered, "I got up too late and didn't have time."
- Then the rabbi asked, "Have you been treating your wife and children with kindness?" —to which the man replied, "Lately, because business has been bad, I've been losing my temper a lot. But what's all this got to do with the ridiculous demands of my horse?"
- The rabbi then said: "Can't you see? Your horse sees that you're acting like an animal, like a beast, so he's decided to act like a human being and demand special treatment."
- So what do you think we can learn from this story?



Gather the People

<http://www.gatherthepeople.org>

© 2003 Moshe ben Asher & Khulda bat Sarah